

IRS News Release

Media Relations Office

Washington, D.C.

Media Contact: 202.622.4000

www.irs.gov/newsroomPublic Contact: 800.829.1040

Free Tax Help Available Nationwide

IR-2011-13, Jan. 28, 2011

WASHINGTON — Over 12,000 free tax preparation sites will be open nationwide this year as the Internal Revenue Service continues to expand its partnerships with nonprofit and community organizations providing vital tax preparation services for low- to moderate-income and elderly taxpayers.

The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program offers free tax help to people who earn less than \$49,000. The Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) Program offers free tax help to taxpayers who are 60 and older.

Today, partners and local officials will be hosting news conferences or issuing news releases nationwide to highlight the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and their free tax preparation programs. The EITC is one of the federal government's largest benefit programs for working families and individuals. But taxpayers must file a tax return, even if they do not have a filing requirement, and specifically claim the credit to get the benefit.

Taxpayers need to present the following items to have their returns prepared:

- Photo identification
- Valid Social Security cards for the taxpayer, spouse and dependents
- Birth dates for primary, secondary and dependents on the tax return
- Wage and earning statement(s) Form W-2, W-2G, 1099-R, from all employers
- Interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1099)
- A copy of last year's federal and state returns, if available
- Bank routing numbers and account numbers for direct deposit
- Other relevant information about income and expenses
- Total paid for day care
- Day care provider's identifying number

To file taxes electronically on a Married Filing Jointly tax return, both spouses must be present to sign the required forms.

Trained community volunteers can help eligible taxpayers with all special credits, such as the EITC, Child Tax Credit or Credit for the Elderly. Also, many sites have language specialists to assist people with limited English skills. To locate the nearest VITA site, taxpayers should check the [VITA site list](#) available online at www.irs.gov or call 1-800-906-9887.

As part of the IRS-sponsored TCE Program, AARP offers the Tax-Aide counseling program at more than 7,000 sites nationwide during the filing season. Trained and certified AARP Tax-Aide volunteer counselors help people of low-to-middle income with special attention to people age 60 and older. To locate the nearest AARP Tax-Aide site, call 1-888-227-7669 or visit AARP's Internet site.

The military also partners with the IRS to provide free tax assistance to military personnel and their families. The Armed Forces Tax Council (AFTC) consists of the tax program coordinators for the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. The AFTC oversees the operation of the military tax programs worldwide, and serves as the main conduit for outreach by the IRS to military personnel and their families. Volunteers are trained and equipped to address military specific tax issues, such as combat zone tax benefits and the effect of the EITC guidelines.

In addition to free tax return preparation assistance, most sites use free electronic filing. An e-filed tax return means a fast refund. Taxpayers who combine e-file and direct deposit can generally get their refunds in as few as 10 days.

Taxpayers who file electronically also can opt to file now and pay later. If taxpayers owe, they can make a payment April 18, 2011, by authorizing an electronic funds withdrawal (direct debit) from a checking or savings account, paying by credit, by check or money order (made out to the United States Treasury) using Form 1040-V, Payment Voucher.

For taxpayers who want to prepare and e-file their own tax returns, there is IRS Free File. Everyone can use Free File, the free way to prepare and e-file federal taxes either through brand-name software or online fillable forms. Individuals or families with 2010 adjusted gross incomes of \$58,000 or less can use Free File software. Free File Fillable Forms, the electronic version of IRS paper forms, has no income restrictions. For either service, taxpayers must go through www.irs.gov/freefile to access the programs.

Taxpayers also can seek free assistance at the 400 IRS Taxpayer Assistance Centers nationwide. On Saturday, Jan. 29, and Saturday, Feb. 5, the [IRS will open selected offices](#) to provide special assistance to EITC eligible taxpayers. In addition, a number of community partners will also open their doors. Locations nationwide are listed on www.irs.gov.